

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please replace the previous claims with the following claims:

1. (currently amended) A hardware upgrade for enhancing the functionality of a set top ~~converter terminal~~ in a television program delivery system, each set top ~~converter terminal~~ adapted to receive electronic mail and having a microprocessor, the hardware upgrade comprising:

an interface for providing an electrical connection to the set top ~~converter terminal~~, whereby ~~digital data, including~~ the electronic mail, is transferred from the set top ~~converter terminal~~ for processing and the processed electronic mail is passed to the set top ~~converter terminal~~ for display;

~~a memory for storing interactive programming instructions that enable a subscriber to engage in textual interactivity with online applications; and~~

~~at least one microprocessor connected to said memory and connected to said interface for accessing the stored interactive programming instructions and for processing the electronic mail to produce processed electronic mail based on the stored interactive programming instructions, the microprocessor of the hardware upgrade capable of communicating with the microprocessor of the set top converter through the interface.~~

2. (Original) The hardware upgrade according to claim 1, wherein said television program delivery system comprises digital video.

3. (cancelled).

4. (currently amended) The hardware upgrade according to claim 1, wherein the interface comprises:

circuitry for receiving subscriber inputs from the set top ~~converter terminal~~, wherein the received subscriber inputs include textual information that is used to produce the processed electronic mail and for transferring the processed electronic mail

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to the set top ~~converter terminal~~ for display.

5. (currently amended) The hardware upgrade according to claim 1, for use with on-line databases, interactive services and message services outside of the television program delivery system, wherein the hardware upgrade ~~further comprises enables the set top terminal to use a telephone modem connected to the at least one microprocessor and adapted to provide communications capability with the on-line databases, interactive services and message services.~~

6. (Previously Presented) The hardware upgrade according to claim 4, further comprising:

 a memory connected to the at least one microprocessor for storing the processed electronic mail.

7-15. (Cancelled)

16. (currently amended) A method for enhancing the functionality of ~~use with~~ a set top ~~converter terminal~~ in a television program delivery system, each set top ~~converter terminal~~ adapted to receive electronic mail and having a microprocessor, the method comprising the steps of:

 providing an electrical connection between the set top ~~converter terminal~~ and a hardware upgrade, whereby ~~digital data, including the electronic mail,~~ is transferred from the set top ~~converter terminal~~ for processing;

 storing interactive programming instructions that enable a subscriber to engage in textual interactivity with online applications;

 accessing the stored interactive programming instructions;

 processing the transferred electronic mail by the hardware upgrade to produce processed electronic mail based on the stored interactive programming instructions; and

 communicating between the microprocessor of the set top ~~converter terminal~~ and a microprocessor of the hardware upgrade.

17. (Original) The method according to claim 16, wherein said television program delivery system comprises digital video.

18. (cancelled)

19. (currently amended) The method according to claim 16, wherein said step of providing an electrical connection to the set top converter terminal further comprises:

receiving subscriber inputs from the set top converter terminal, wherein the received subscriber inputs includes textual information that is used to produce the processed electronic mail; and

transferring the processed electronic mail to the set top converter terminal for display.

20. (Original) The method according to claim 16, further comprising the step of communicating with on-line databases, interactive services and message services outside of the television program delivery system.

21. (Original) The method according to claim 19, further comprising the step of: storing the processed electronic mail.

22-42. (Cancelled)

43. (Previously Presented) The hardware upgrade of claim 1, wherein the hardware upgrade enables the subscriber to engage in textural interactivity using overlay menus.

44. (currently amended) The hardware upgrade of claim 1, wherein the microprocessor of the set top converter terminal is capable of coordinating reception of signals from the television program delivery system and interacting with an upstream data transmitter.

45. (new) A hardware upgrade for a set top terminal in a television program delivery

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system, the hardware upgrade comprising:

 a modem for accessing an online service outside of the television program delivery system and for receiving electronic mail from the online service;

 a memory for storing (i) programming instructions that enable a subscriber to engage in textual interactivity with processing of the electronic mail, and (ii) a mailbox for the transferred and processed electronic mail;

 a microprocessor for processing the electronic mail based on the programming instructions and the textural interactivity, the microprocessor of the hardware upgrade capable of communicating with the microprocessor of the set top terminal through an interface; and

 the interface, for providing an electrical connection between the set top terminal and the hardware upgrade, and for transferring the processed electronic mail from the hardware upgrade to the set top terminal for display.

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